



## **Notes from Ad-hoc Hwy 99W Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)**

<b>Date of Meeting: September 10, 2007</b>
<b>Name of Committee: CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Minutes by: Ron Bunch and Marissa Daniels (City Staff)</b>
<b>Called to order by: Ron Bunch, Assistant Community Development Director</b>
<b>Location: Red Rock Creek Conference Room</b>
<b>Time Started: 6:30 pm</b>
<b>Time Ended: 9:00 pm</b>

**Members Present:** Cherree Weeks, Daniel Barnes, Roger Potthoff, Tim McGilvrey, Tom Fergusson, Jesse Black, Rex Caffall

**Members Absent:** Paul Owen, William Moss, Sue Carver, Steve Boughton

**Others Present:** Lidwien Rahman, Senior Planner, Region 1, ODOT

**Staff Present:** Ron Bunch, Assistant Community Development Director; Doreen Laughlin, Administrative Specialist II

**Agenda Item #1:** Opening and Introductions, Staff

**Important Discussion and/or Comments:** Ron Bunch introduced Lidwien Rahman, Sr. Planner of Region 1, ODOT.

**Action Items (Follow-Up or Votes):** None

**Agenda Item #2:** Council Review; City Adoption and Legislative process, Staff

**Important Discussion and/or Comments:** Ron Bunch reviewed the background of the Citizen Involvement Committee's (CAC's) request to provide their own recommendations to City Council apart from the consultant and City staff's recommendations. He noted the groups desire to approach the Highway 99W project from a perspective different from that of the engineering study.

Mr. Bunch noted the technical/engineering approach to solving Highway 99Ws traffic and safety problems is important and that the CAC's intent is not to take issue with the technical elements of the study. The CAC wishes instead to address important issues such as community livability, future land uses, future policy positions, public process, how to implement the plan, etc.

Mr. Bunch then reviewed the CAC's meeting materials. The packet contained meeting notes of the five past CAC meetings, public responses taken at an open house, and a summary of stakeholder interviews. In addition to the meeting materials, staff carefully reviewed the CAC meeting minutes and put together a tool the group could use to help make recommendations to City Council.

Ms. Rahman said it is important for the CAC to consider asking Council to adopt the preferred plan option and incorporate it into the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP). This was identified as Alternative B. She said City adoption is important because future state, regional, and possibly federal funding for the implementation of specific projects in the plan is tied to being part of the City's TSP.

Discussion followed with Ms. Rahman emphasizing that ODOT would not implement projects the City had not endorsed. She said ODOT tries to work in partnership with jurisdictions affected by its facilities. Ms. Rahman noted that most of the CAC's suggestions were consistent with the spirit and intent of the proposed alternatives. The CAC is to be complimented on their serious consideration of these issues. However, CAC recommendations that are not part of Alternative B are matters where the City needs to initiate implementation. For example, if the City wishes to "evaluate future Highway 99W projects in a public forum according to livability criteria," then the City would need to take the lead in doing so, and provide input to ODOT. ODOT is not opposed to the CAC's recommendations. They are good ideas. It is important to take into account community values and locally expressed needs.

**Action Items (Follow-Up or Votes):** None

**Agenda Item #3: CAC Hwy 99W Corridor Plan Recommendation and Council Presentation, CAC**

**Important Discussion and/or Comments:** At the beginning of the meeting, there was discussion about the design and construction of the proposed Beef Bend Road / Highway 99W turn lane. Ms. Rahman provided an overview of how improvements to this intersection could be implemented.

Following this there was discussion about whether adoption of the preferred alternative would place a cloud on private property because additional right-of-way would be required. Ms. Rahman said that adoption of the preferred alternative by the City would not do that. She said the study is at the conceptual level. Even though some right-of-way would be needed to improve intersections (per the plan) to provide bus queue by-pass lanes, turn lanes, etc, it is far from known how much and where the right-of-way will be needed. She said the specific right-of-way is identified only at the end of the design and engineering process, when the extent of the improvements has been determined. At that time, ODOT negotiates to purchase right-of-way. Therefore, adoption of a conceptual plan such as this does not "put a cloud" on property. Ms. Rahman went on to say that of all the alternatives considered, Alternative B has the least potential right-of-way impacts.

Following this discussion, the CAC noted that property owners and businesses must be informed about potential impacts of Plan implementation, especially of possible right-of-way acquisition. The *CAC recommended to City Council* that:

- 1. Prior to implementation of projects associated with the Highway 99W Corridor Plan, especially those requiring additional right-of-way or affecting property access, there shall be established protocols whereby affected property owners or businesses are made aware of pending improvements. Those that might be affected shall be informed and asked to be involved in the project development process as early as possible.**

The CAC and staff then discussed the potential impacts of the I-5 / Hwy 99W Connector project on Highway 99W. Ms Rahman said that this project is very important for the whole region. She said that if a connector is built the character of Highway 99W would change as a result. For example, 99W might no longer be designated a freight route. Also, 99W's classification could change from a regional arterial to a local arterial. In that case, different design and engineering requirements would apply. Following discussion, *the CAC recommended to the City Council* that:

- 2. The City of Tigard shall state a position that alignment of the proposed I-5 / Hwy 99W Connector be established as one which reduces through traffic and freight movement on Highway 99W to the greatest extent possible; and that the City shall support this position and otherwise participate in the project as an active member of the I-5 / 99W Connector Steering Committee.**

CAC member Jesse Black expressed doubt that an I-5/99W Connector would take a lot of traffic off Hwy 99W. He said that traffic would likely still use the facility for access to the ocean beaches and I-5.

Mr. Bunch then referred the CAC to the chart, which summarized its discussion of issues during the last five meetings. The document also included staff responses, and ideas for CAC recommendations that were generated at previous meetings. He emphasized that the material was intended to be a tool the CAC could use to formulate recommendations.

The first topic addressed is the need for Tigard to maintain and enhance livability for citizens and business people. For example, improvements to Highway 99W have the potential to increase safety, mobility, and aesthetics of the community. Furthermore, improvements to the highway are important for business viability. Congestion and safety problems are bad for business.

During discussion about the livability topic, the CAC stressed the importance of defining what "livability" means in this context. The CAC feels livability, as it pertains to the Highway 99W area means:

- Auto, pedestrian and bike safety;
- Enhanced mobility; better access to transit;

- A well designed and attractive environment;
- A good place to do business and shop;
- Improvements to environmental quality;
- The opportunity for mixed land uses to coexist, and
- A good place to do business

It was noted by Mr. Bunch that implementation of Alternative B would address these principles. To what extent they are addressed is up to decision-makers, both at the City and ODOT. Discussion noted that improving Highway 99W will enhance the whole community if these principles are observed. This is because Highway 99W is such a defining feature of Tigard.

Discussion followed about the importance of citizen involvement in making transportation related decisions. Staff noted the City has a practice of notifying and working with the public when designing and implementing transportation improvements. The CAC stressed that having a public discussion about transportation issues is important to ensure needs are met and education about transportation issues occurs. Furthermore, members of the public who use the road system on a daily basis have good ideas for possible improvement. The Highway 99W improvement plan has an opportunity to involve the public on a continuous basis, not just on a one-time project basis. Many of the issues associated with the Highway fall into the management category.

The discussion moved to the fact that there are hundreds of businesses along Highway 99W and these businesses need to be safely accessible to their customers. This is important to economic viability. Discussion emphasized that businesses viability and the ability of the corridor to provide goods and services to the public should be considered a livability factor. After discussion, *the CAC recommended to the City Council* that:

- 3. As part of the transportation management, planning and design process, the livability benefits of future Highway 99W improvements shall be publicly discussed and evaluated.**

The CAC discussed that there have been a number of planning efforts for the Highway 99W Corridor in the last several years. What is needed to make this effort different from others is a formal commitment to act. It was noted that an important way to do this is for City Council to adopt the preferred alternative, "Alternative B", as part of the City's Transportation System Plan. In addition, specific implementation actions are needed such as the development and implementation of an access management plan, scheduling Highway 99W as part of the Capital Improvement / Public Facilities Plan, and development of a Highway 99W Corridor land use plan.

Ms. Rahman stressed that the City needs to be engaged in some of the ongoing regional transportation and land use planning efforts. An important example is Regional Transportation Options planning that will be starting soon. Working with other jurisdictions in a regional context is an important part of getting projects implemented not just where Highway 99W is concerned but for all of the City's transportation system.

Mr. Bunch pointed out that in prior meetings the CAC discussed/evaluated the three proposed alternatives in context of the following:

Future improvements to Highway 99W should:

- Not create even greater barriers between the east and west parts of the community;
- Not make improvements (costly or otherwise) that preclude future options for future high capacity transit options or that attract even more through traffic;
- Improve the aesthetic character of the road, and mitigate environmental consequences;
- Make possible safer and more comfortable transit access; and
- Improve the business environment.

Discussion noted that improvements should not only prevent widening barrier between the two parts of Tigard, but should also reduce the barrier that already exists.

After discussion, *the CAC recommended to City Council* that:

- 4. The City shall adopt Alternative B as part of its Transportation System Plan and prioritize its recommendations. Subsequently, the City, shall in conjunction with other agencies, jurisdictions and stakeholders, develop action plans to implement the alternative's specific project recommendations. Action plans to implement Alternative B s shall include, design and engineering strategies, funding measures, stakeholder and citizen engagement. Reasonable time frames shall be associated with the action plans.**

The CAC noted that throughout the planning process there were a number of questions / concerns posed by citizens about whether future improvements to Highway 99W would have impacts on other streets in the community. This issue was discussed generally at some of the CAC meetings, but no specific impacts on other streets were identified. The CAC felt that this is an important issue. Planning for and enhancing Highway 99W should not occur without identifying impacts on other streets and mitigating negative impacts if necessary. In addition, other streets might work better due to improvements made on Highway 99W. These positive impacts should also be identified.

It was also noted that land development activities and improvement of other streets within the vicinity of Highway 99W could have impacts on the highway. Therefore, it is important that these activities also be assessed on their potential negative or positive effects on Highway 99W and on the parts of the community affected by the highway. *The CAC recommended to City Council* that:

- 5. Other transportation and land development projects within the vicinity of Highway 99W shall be evaluated to determine potential negative or positive impacts on the facility. Negative impacts shall be avoided or mitigated. Furthermore, it is important that solutions to Highway 99W problems be evaluated to assess impacts on other streets and that negative impacts in these circumstances be avoided or mitigated and positive impacts promoted.**

The CAC discussed at length the need for a new land use plan for lands both along, and in the vicinity, of Highway 99W. The group expressed that this is essential in addressing the goal of achieving an economically vibrant, attractive business and residential district and to better managing traffic.

Committee members noted that the success of transit is dependent on creating the proper climate within which more intense business activity and residential development can take place. There was discussion that business vitality will be dependent on the ability of Highway 99W to safely and comfortably provide transportation services. Also, it was noted that the highway and adjacent lands must be “recreated” as places where people want to be – where they want to go

The question was asked how a distinct sense of place can be created along Highway 99W. The City can have a whole set of goals, but tangible and practical measures are needed to transform the corridor. Mr. Bunch said that it has been done in other parts of the nation and examples can be found. However, transformation is partly a function of the real estate market.

During discussion it was stressed that many communities have used urban renewal tools to redevelop highway commercial strips. Many times this has occurred in conjunction with major public transportation investments, including transit – light rail or rapid bus.

During discussion, it was noted that areas fronting the highway are not pleasant places to be. It is hard to imagine that anyone would want to live next to a busy road. This is an important design issue. Residential environments, in most cases need to be set back from the road, and in general, the appearance of 99W needs to be improved.

Further discussion identified several “practical ways” of improving the corridor. These included land use and design standards for the corridor; allowing higher density residential development including taller buildings, in addition to making more efficient use of the land area. Shared parking is one example. Looking at the Highway 99W corridor from the air, most of the land use is devoted to parking. It was stressed that Tigard should allow multi-story buildings; taller than those currently allowed.

It was stated that the Highway 99W commercial land use district is relatively narrow compared to other successful corridors. More land area might be needed to create the critical mass of residential, commercial and employment uses required for a vibrant and economically prosperous corridor. Also, again it was stressed that a certain intensity / density of employment, housing, and other activities are needed to support transit.

CAC members stressed that compatibility of 99W Corridor development with adjacent single-family neighborhoods is important. In addition, land use planning for Highway 99W must not be done piece-meal. Perhaps the whole strip needs to be planned at once or at least large segments done so.

There was discussion about focusing future commercial land use development at key intersections and allowing / promoting development of higher density residential on segments of the highway. It

was noted that Metro conducted a study of potential corridor redevelopment scenarios on other corridors in the region using this model. In these instances, it was found that a lot of commercially designated land had more value as high-density residential properties.

The CAC stressed that future land use planning needs to develop a framework within which transit can be a viable transportation option. Some CAC members felt that a land use planning effort is a critical / essential part of recreating Highway 99W. *The CAC recommended that:*

- 6. A land use planning effort shall be a priority for future City / state efforts to recreate the Highway 99W corridor. In particular, coordinated land use and transportation planning is essential to promote transit as a viable transportation option.**

Ron Bunch noted there was considerable discussion at previous CAC meetings about specific, tangible solutions to problems on Highway 99W. It was noted that many of the proposals brought forward did not appear to meet either City or ODOT engineering / design standards; however, at past meetings the CAC stressed that it is important to “think outside the box” to come up with creative solutions.

Ms Rahman stressed that the CAC’s recommendations are good ones, but ODOT has specific engineering standards to protect public safety. She said being creative and thinking outside the box is a good thing. If the City wishes to do things not consistent with ODOT standards then an “exception” process is available. Unless an exception is approved, ODOT has a public safety obligation to abide by its standards. *The CAC recommended that:*

- 7. The City should be imaginative and "think outside the box" with the purpose of creating a safe, attractive, transit oriented and vibrant urban corridor along Highway 99W. When there are obvious benefits to specific physical improvements the city should request design exceptions from ODOT.**

The CAC discussed the access management element of Alternative B. It was noted that access management is an essential part of the overall recommendation, and a specific plan is needed to implement it. Ms. Rahman stressed that an "Access Management Plan" should be a City priority. If the City wishes to implement, the planning effort’s recommendations, then an access plan needs to be developed as soon as possible.

She also noted that access management does not happen overnight. It is a multi-year commitment that requires staff time and support by appointed and elected leaders. Also, she noted that access management needs to be “sold” as a benefit to businesses and property owners whereby it increases customer potential by enhancing safety and eliminating congestion. Before actually proposing to actually close or relocate driveways, a public education effort is needed. This is a sensitive issue and requires consistent effort.

Ms. Rahman added that it is common sense to view access management issues for each property as unique. It is not ODOT’s approach to apply a one-size-fits-all solution.

The CAC stressed that Highway 99W businesses have a real interest in this issue. Their viability is important. It was apparent in the stakeholder survey that business owners believe safety and congestion issues along the highway need to be addressed. The business owners who participated in the survey seemed to be aware of the constraints congestion places on them.

The Committee felt it important to develop an Access Management Plan soon. Discussion noted the Access Management Plan should prioritize access points that are particularly dangerous. There also was discussion about unobstructed access (the frontage of a property open to access). This presents a higher degree of hazard. In this case, those walking to transit stops along the highway are at risk.

*The CAC recommended that:*

- 8. In the near term, the City and ODOT shall develop an Access Management Plan for Highway 99W. Each property identified as needing access management treatment shall be treated as unique. A one-size fits all approach should not be used. The economic vitality of businesses is important.**

The CAC discussed the importance of transit to the future of Highway 99W and Tigard. It was noted that well designed, efficient, safe and comfortable transit is essential to achieve the City's goals. Discussion noted that ultimately light rail along the corridor is what the City should strive to attain. Within such an environment, there could be a supportive mix of transit opportunities including commuter rail, buses, and perhaps streetcars. However, the CAC recognized light rail is a long-term prospect. For the short and even midterm, it is important to support the bus system. In fact, some CAC members emphasized that rubber tired vehicles have much more flexibility than a fixed route train system. Dedicated bus lanes in both directions would be much cheaper to build than light rail. Furthermore, these systems are cheaper to operate and provide greater flexibility.

Regardless of when light rail becomes feasible, the CAC stressed that Tigard, ODOT, Washington County, and others must have a continual focus on providing better transit service and creating a land-use pattern that is supportive of transit. Conversely, transit investments are needed to jump-start higher intensity real estate investments that are transit supportive.

*The CAC recommended that:*

- 9. Implementing improved transit service should be an ongoing priority with the long-term objective of light rail service along the Highway 99W corridor. If light rail is not possible within the reasonable future then improved bus service/rubber tired vehicles shall serve as an alternative until is.**

Staff asked the CAC if the Highway 99W overpass viaduct is an important issue. It was noted by Ms. Rahman that the viaduct had been assessed by ODOT engineers and found to be structurally sound. CAC discussion resulted in a consensus that it is not necessary to address the viaduct as a separate issue. The viaduct may need to be remodeled to add bike or pedestrian capacity, but major maintenance is all that is necessary for the near future.



The CAC underscored that Highway 99W has hundreds of businesses of varying sizes all along it. The Corridor is an important part of Tigard's economy. Businesses depend on the ability of the highway to accommodate traffic and provide access. Staff said the improvement of Highway 99W is both a transportation and economic development issue. Discussions by the CAC emphasized that improvements to the highway must consider economic impacts and seek to improve land values and economic vitality. Roger Pottoff noted a proactive effort is needed to assure the economic viability of businesses along Highway 99W and elsewhere in the community. An economic development coordinator is needed to facilitate, problem solve, and communicate with businesses. The CAC concurred that an economic development function is needed within the City and that the economic development issues facing Highway 99W are good examples of why.

*The CAC recommended that:*

- 10. Highway 99W Action Plans shall seek to enhance the economic vitality of the corridor through transportation, aesthetic, land use and other improvements. In addition, staff resources shall be committed to coordinate business development and retention activities and aid in communication among the business community and city government.**

**Action Items (Follow-Up or Votes):** None

#### **Agenda Item #4: Summary and Overview of CAC Decision and Next Steps**

**Important Discussion and/or Comments:** The CAC discussed the next steps. Mr. Bunch said that the City Council is scheduled to hold a work session on November 20, 2007. At this time, the Council will be asked by staff to initiate a Transportation System Plan Amendment to incorporate the study's recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan. This matter will then be taken up by the Planning Commission. The Commission will hold a public hearing and then make a recommendation to Council to complete the legislative change. The Council will then hold its own public hearing.

The CAC asked about their role at the City Council work session and at subsequent meetings. Mr. Bunch said that at the Council work session staff will present the technical part of the plan and provide an overview of the CAC's involvement process and their recommendations. However, it is important to have CAC members present and to represent the committee's recommendations and other matters it wished to raise.

Mr. Bunch said the City is updating its Comprehensive Plan and there are opportunities to incorporate the CAC's recommendations as policies and action measures within the text of the Comprehensive Plan. However, as previously discussed, these new Comprehensive Plan statements, if adopted, would be local policies and action measures that need coordinated with other affected jurisdictions and agencies.

Further CAC discussion noted that the Highway 99W Plan needs to be coordinated with other interested groups, city advisory boards, and committees. For example, it is important the Chamber of Commerce and neighborhood groups know about the Plan. Mr. Bunch stated there have been some

CAC Meeting Minutes for September 10, 2007

Page 9 of 10

open houses, but more citizen engagement will happen as part of the Comprehensive Plan / TSP amendment process. He noted that this type of legislative change takes four or five months and there will be time for additional citizen involvement. In addition, specific implementation actions will require extensive stakeholder engagement. The above mentioned access management plan was used as an example.

Mr. Bunch said that staff would prepare the meeting notes and get materials back to the CAC with ample time to comment via phone and Email before the Council meeting.

**Action Items (Follow-Up or Votes):** None.

**Agenda Item #5: Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.